

Shareware and Freeware Installation and Precautions

What is Shareware? Shareware is "try before you buy" software. After the specified trial period (usually 30 days) you are required to either pay for the software or to remove it from your computer.

Shareware can sometimes be crippled in the trial period (e.g. you are unable to print or otherwise assess the program's full features). If you do eventually buy such software, ensure that you have the ability to return the software if these features don't work or don't meet your requirements after purchase because you've not been able to fully test the software.

What happens if I don't remove Shareware? That depends. Many will just stop operating, some will popup frequent reminders, and others will greatly restrict features of the software.

What is Freeware? You can install and use freeware software without charge but the author retains ownership. Some request a postcard or email to let the author know you're using their programs. Some will accept donations. Most don't ask for anything.

Can I comment or ask for improvements? Most developers welcome these and provide the means to do so. Positive comments on the developer's site along with your recommendations for improvement go a long way in getting the response you desire. Be polite. Remember, they've developed this either because they needed the software themselves or because it is a passion.

Is Shareware and Freeware any good? Yes and no, just like commercial software. There are hundreds of hobbyist coders out there creating all kinds of software. Their experience ranges from the beginner to folks with years of experience. There are also firms that give out free programs because it's not commercially viable to sell it, or they hope that you like their free program enough and will buy their upmarket or other products.

How can I be sure of the product? It is best to use a referring site (such as those listed in this handout) than download an unknown program from a programmer with unknown skills.

Whoa, what this 'download' word mean? 'Downloading' describes receiving some distinct data on your computer, usually from the internet. In reality you are constantly performing downloading and uploading. Simply receiving an email is downloading. The opposite is 'uploading' and that where information flows from your computer to the internet, thus sending an email is uploading. Even searching using say Google involves you 'uploading' a request for information, and Google 'downloading' the results of that request.

What are safe download sites? Try Gizmos site at **www.techsupportalert.com**

It is highly regarded, well organised, has great reviews of freeware together with links to download from. It also has a listing of other highly regarded safe sites at **www.techsupportalert.com/best_shareware_sites.htm**

Is 'downloading' straight forward? Mostly. Some sites will offer you other software as well, or popup big adverts, or make you wait up to a minute before the download starts so you have time to read their adverts. Just take your time and read things carefully. Watch for misleading download links. Advertising helps provide the revenue to run these sites, but downloading an unexpected piece of software is not a fair exchange.

Remember the old advice – 'If it's too good to be true then it probably isn't'

So I've 'downloaded' nnn program now what? Now you need to locate that downloaded file and double click it to install the program. Usually the downloaded file will be saved into your 'My Downloads' folder or onto your Desktop. That's why it's important to read those little prompts that occur when you download something as they will tell you where it's being saved and the file name. On at least Chrome and Internet Explorer, holding down the 'Ctrl' key and tapping the 'J' key will list your downloads and where they have been saved.

Sometimes the download will come with a 'Read me' file. It's usually a good idea to read them.

Can the installing also install Viruses and Malware? There is always that possibility. Check the reviews at a couple of the referring sites and only download from links at them. Always have a fully functioning antivirus program installed and updated. Most will check the program as it is downloaded. Weekly checks of the whole computer (or when you suspect trouble) is also strongly recommended.

Is there anything I need to do during the installation? Most installations popup up a series of small screens telling you what it will do. This is called a 'wizard'. Make sure to carefully read and check the options during install. In particular check for extra add-ons like toolbars, changes to your search system, additional programs, trial editions etc. Be sure you understand what each option is and deselect the unwanted options before proceeding to the next step. That way, you avoid future problems. I almost always reject all additional add-ons.

Some "free" software *requires* that you install other software as part of the license to use it. I suggest you not install such programs no matter how attractive their features.

How do I remove any of these programs? Removing a program is called 'uninstalling'. Some programs come with a command to uninstall it. So first check the Start button, All Programs, the folder for that program to see if it mentions uninstall. If so then use that command.

The second method is to use the Windows system – Start button, Settings, Control Panel, Programs, Uninstall a program. (Or it may be located at Start button, Settings, Control Panel, Programs and Features.) This will take a few seconds to list all the installed programs. Just select the required program and click 'Uninstall' (or right click it and select 'Uninstall').

I can't figure out how to use the program I've just installed? Learning any program takes time and effort by you. Read what electronic instructions came with it. Check out the help menu. Do any tutorials that are offered. Search the internet for tips and instructions. Search in YouTube. Don't just quit at the first hurdle simply because the program didn't cost you anything. Paid for programs require effort to learn too.